

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----056790 191157Z /14

O 191131Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9245
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 05117

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, XF, UNSC, PORG, PEPR, LE
SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL MIDDLE EAST DEBATE

REF: STATE 70432

1. DCM AND POL COUNSELOR CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
V.I. ISRAELYAN, CHIEF OF MFA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZA-
TIONS DIVISION AT 12:30 MOSCOW TIME MARCH 19, WHICH
WAS EARLIEST THAT APPOINTMENT AT MFA COULD BE ARRANGED.
DCM PRESENTED TALKING POINTS IN PARA 2 REFTEL AND
PROVIDED ISRAELYAN A COPY OF THE U.S. RESOLUTION.

2. READING THE TEXT CAREFULLY ISRAELYAN NOTED THAT
IT HAD SEVERAL CHANGES FROM AN EARLIER VERSION GIVEN
TO THE SOVIETS. NEVERTHELESS HAVING CONSULTED WITH
FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO THIS MORNING
HE COULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS:

--FIRST OF ALL AS THE SOVIETS HAD REMARKED BOTH IN
WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK THE USSR HOLDS STRONGLY THAT
THE RESOLUTION MUST SHARPLY CONDEMN THE "BARBAROUS"

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ISRAELI INVASION, WHICH COULD HAVE EXTRAORDINARY IM-
PLICATIONS FOR THE ME AND THE WORLD. IN THIS CONNECTION
IT MUST BE RECALLED THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS
ALREADY UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNED ISRAEL. THE POINT TO BE
MADE HERE IS THAT THE RESOLUTION TO BE ADOPTED MUST
SERVE AS A LESSON SO THAT ISRAEL WILL IN THE FUTURE
NOT REPEAT AN ACT WHICH HAS BEEN HITHERTO CHARACTERISTIC.

CONDEMNATION WOULD STRENGTHEN RATHER THAN WEAKEN THE EFFECT OF THE RESOLUTION.

--IN PRINCIPLE THE USSR IS NOT AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF UN TROOPS PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT SERVE AS AN EXCUSE FOR A NON SETTLEMENT. CALLING ATTENTION TO THE TERM "INTERIM FORCE" IN OUR DRAFT ISRAELYAN SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WERE CAUTIOUS LEST THERE BE A RECURRENCE OF PAST EXPERIENCE WHEN UN TROOPS ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED FOR A SHORT PERIOD STAYED ON AND ON THROUGH "AUTOMATIC" RENEWALS.

--THE SOVIETS ALSO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE MANDATE. IN THE SOVIET VIEW, UN FORCES SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THREE FUNCTIONS: (A) OBSERVATION OF A CEASE-FIRE; (B) ENSURING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL; AND (C) SEPARATION OF CONTENDING FORCES AND DELIMITATION OF BUFFER ZONES. IN THIS CONNECTION HE DREW SPECIAL ATTENTION TO OUR DRAFT LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD DEFINE ONE OF THE DUTIES OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE AS "ENSURING THE RETURN OF EFFECTIVE AUTHORITY IN THE AREA TO THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON." HE SAID THAT, GIVEN THE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON-- BY WHICH HE MEANT THE PRESENCE OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIANS DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES BY THE ISRAELIS--
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THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT UN FORCES COULD BE DRAWN INTO LEBANESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN EXERCISING THEIR DUTY TO RESTORE LEBANESE AUTHORITY. IF SO, THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE AN UNWELCOME PRECEDENT.

--THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY IF SO REQUESTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON.

3. DCM SAID THAT HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS WHICH WOULD PERMIT HIM TO COMMENT OFFICIALLY BEYOND THE POINTS HE HAD MADE ALREADY. HOWEVER, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT A DEBATE REGARDING CONDEMNATION OF ONE PARTY IN THIS UNFORTUNATE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE MIGHT DELAY THE RESULT THAT BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS CLEARLY SUPPORT: THE IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES. THE MATTER OF RESPONSIBILITY IS A COMPLEX ISSUE AND THE SOVIETS SHOULD NOT IGNORE THE TRAGIC EVENTS WHICH PROMPTED THE ISRAELI ACTION. AS FOR THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INTERIM PEACEKEEPING

FORCE, IT WOULD SEEM LOGICAL THAT AUTHORITY BE RESTORED
TO THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON, WHICH IS THE SOVEREIGN
AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED BY ALL. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----056834 191158Z /10

O 191131Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9246
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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THAT THIS RESOLUTION HAS THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

4. ISRAELYAN REPLIED THAT IN THE SOVIET VIEW A
CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL WOULD NOT DELAY ISRAELI WITH-
DRAWAL, SINCE IF THE RESOLUTION PASSED ISRAEL WOULD
WITHDRAW WHETHER IT IS CONDEMNED OR NOT. HOWEVER, UNSC
CONDEMNATION IS IMPORTANT "AS A LESSON TO ISRAEL" TO
PREVENT SUCH ACTIONS IN THE FUTURE. HE REITERATED
THAT THE SOVIETS SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF AN INTERIM PEACEKEEPING FORCE, BUT STRESSED THAT
THEY ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR THE FORCE WHICH WOULD OBLIGATE IT TO "ENSURE"
THE RETURN OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY SINCE THIS COULD
SET A PRECEDENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS
WHICH WOULD BE NEITHER IN THE U.S. OR SOVIET INTEREST.

5. COMMENT: FROM ISRAELYAN'S REMARKS, IT APPEARS
THAT THE SOVIETS ARE DISPOSED TO:

(A) INSIST ON A SPECIFIC CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL
AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE RESOLUTION; AND

(B) ATTEMPT TO MODIFY THE LANGUAGE REGARDING "ENSURING"
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RETURN OF AUTHORITY TO LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, IN ORDER--
INTER ALIA--TO LIMIT POSSIBILITY THAT PEACEKEEPING
FORCE COULD BE USED AGAINST PLO.

ISRAELYAN CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT SOVIETS WOULD SUPPORT
RESOLUTION IF THESE CONDITIONS MET. IF THEY ARE NOT,
SOVIET CHOICE WHETHER TO ABSTAIN OR VETO WILL DOUBTLESS
BE INFLUENCED BY OPINION OF THEIR ARAB FRIENDS,
ESPECIALLY SYRIANS AND PLO.

6. IN THE MEANTIME WE CAN EXPECT FURTHER PROPAGANDA
ALONG THE LINES WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTING, AND WHICH
IS CONTINUED IN TODAY'S PRESS, CHARGING THAT ISRAEL'S
INVASION WAS LONG PRE-PLANNED, HAD USG APPROVAL,
AND MERELY USED THE AL FATAH RAID AS A PRETEXT. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW05117
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780121-1156
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780350/aaaabqae.tel
Line Count: 189
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 198f7cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 70432
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3278636
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECURITY COUNCIL MIDDLE EAST DEBATE
TAGS: PBOR, PORG, PEPR, XF, LE, UNSC
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/198f7cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014